



WISCONSIN WELLHEAD PROTECTION NEWS

Fall 2004



FALL IS IN THE AIR

Hi everyone. With school and football in full swing, it's time for another issue of Wisconsin Wellhead Protection News. In this issue you can find out about the new groundwater law, new publications you might be interested in, the status of Wisconsin's source water assessment effort, the new Source Water Protection Program being initiated by the Wisconsin Rural Water Association (WRWA), and upcoming groundwater workshops for teachers.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations are in order for a number of communities who are or have been involved in wellhead protection (WHP) planning to protect their water supply wells. Blair, Embarrass, Niagara, Plain, Pleasant View Nursing Home, Richland Center and Westboro Sanitary District have worked with or are working with Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) or WRWA staff on wellhead protection plans, ordinances or both. You are commended for being proactive in protecting your water supply.

Communities which have developed wellhead protection plans for new wells since the last newsletter include Arcadia, Bowler, Chilton, Colby, Greenwood, Hudson, Janesville, Lake Delton, Oakfield, Shawano and Viroqua. Hats off to these communities as well for recognizing the importance of wellhead protection. Keep up the good work!

In addition, it has been encouraging to see that a number of water utilities have expressed interest in wellhead protection when returning their vulnerability assessment (VA) forms. The VA forms were sent out earlier this year and offer an opportunity to request information or assistance with wellhead protection planning. The WDNR regional Source Water Assessment staff and I have been responding to these requests.

The WDNR's wellhead protection website includes a listing of those communities who, according to our records, have adopted a plan for at least one of their wells. The list now includes over 230 communities. Check out the website at dnr.wi.gov/org/water/dwg/gw/whp/communities.pdf.

If you would like assistance from the WDNR in getting started, contact me by phone, email, regular mail or fax (see below).

You can also contact Ed Morse, Groundwater Specialist for the WRWA, at 920-648-7578 or edmorse@charter.net. Ed works with small communities (less than 10,000) on wellhead protection planning.

Another option is to contact an engineering firm or a professional hydrogeologist to help develop a wellhead protection plan. Check your yellow pages for engineering firms or hydrogeologists in your area.

If you have ideas regarding topics or questions that could be addressed in future newsletters, contact me by phone (877-268-9355 toll free), by fax (608-267-7650), by email (david.lindorff@dnr.state.wi.us) or regular mail (Wisconsin DNR, P. O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707-7921).

Dave Lindorff, Editor

GROUNDWATER QUANTITY LEGISLATION BECOMES LAW

You may have heard about the groundwater quantity legislation which was approved by the Legislature and signed by Governor Doyle on Earth Day. This new law (2003 Wisconsin Act 310) was the result of extensive effort by a Committee co-chaired by Senator Neal Kedzie and Representative DuWayne Johnsrud. These two legislators brought together various interest groups to fashion legislation to address the groundwater quantity issues that we face in Wisconsin. One of the important features of this law is that it recognizes the connection between surface water and groundwater and that affecting one can affect the other.

Briefly, the law requires advance notice to the WDNR for all new wells, private or high capacity, to assure that the wells are located and built correctly to avoid harming groundwater quantity and quality. Fees are required to allow the state to systematically track and inspect the construction of new wells.

The law requires WDNR staff to consider the environmental impact of high capacity wells (greater than 70 gallons per minute) if the proposed well would be located near some streams, large springs or other sensitive, high quality waters.

The law directs the WDNR to establish Groundwater Management Areas around Brown and Waukesha counties, where groundwater drawdown is already a significant problem and where overpumping of the aquifer is creating water quality problems with arsenic, radium and salinity.

Finally, the law establishes a Groundwater Advisory Committee, which will recommend, by the end of 2006, what ought to be done in these Groundwater Management Areas, and will evaluate, by the end of 2007, how the law is working.

For a more complete summary of the legislation, go to www.legis.state.wi.us/lc/act_memo/2003/act310-ab926.pdf. The June 2004 issue of the Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine included an article describing some of the groundwater quantity problems Wisconsin faces and some of the solutions being considered to address them. To read the article, go to www.wnrmag.com/stories/2004/jun04/ground.htm.

The WDNR has developed a request for staff and funding to initiate the regulatory program. We will keep everyone informed as we move to establish this program.

WATER RESOURCES FACT SHEETS

For information on some of the water resources issues Wisconsin faces, check out four fact sheets prepared by the UW System Water Resources Institute. The fact sheets are titled, "Water Wealth, Water Woes", "Groundwater Drawdown", "Arsenic" and "PCBs in Green Bay". Each is two pages long and can be viewed at wri.wisc.edu/waterfactsheets.asp. They can be ordered by calling 608-263-3259.

WISCONSIN GROUNDWATER DIRECTORY

If you've ever wondered who to call about a particular groundwater problem, the recently completed "Wisconsin Groundwater Directory" will be a valuable tool. Developed by the Education Subcommittee of the Groundwater Coordinating Council, the Directory is intended to help those looking for information on various groundwater topics. Contact information is provided for issues including data collection and analysis; well construction, permitting, abandonment and compensation; drinking water supply and testing; groundwater protection and land use; and others. The Directory also identifies groundwater activities by agency, lists available educational resources and includes contact information for local, state and federal agencies plus nonprofit organizations with groundwater responsibilities.

You can view and download the Directory at www.uwsp.edu/cnr/gndwater/info/index.htm or obtain a paper copy by calling Dave Lindorff.

WISCONSIN'S WATERS: A CONFLUENCE OF PERSPECTIVES

In the last issue of the newsletter, I mentioned the availability of the Waters of Wisconsin Report from the Wisconsin Academy of Letters and Sciences. This was an outcome of the Waters of Wisconsin Conference held in October, 2002.

The Wisconsin Academy recently completed another publication that offers perspectives from several water professionals on a number of water resources issues in the state. This publication, "Wisconsin's Waters: A Confluence of Perspectives", contains articles on a wide variety of topics, including a water primer, Wisconsin's waters and climate, the public trust doctrine, Wisconsin groundwater policy, recreational water, water and Wisconsin agriculture, and others. You can see the table of contents and order a copy by going to www.wisconsinacademy.org/publications/contents.html.

SOURCE WATER ASSESSMENTS – WRAPPING UP

By now, all municipal water system operators should have received their source water assessment from WDNR staff. Regional WDNR Source Water Assessment staff are currently completing assessments for the non-municipal public water supply systems. Assessments will be completed for all 11,000 plus public systems by the end of the year.

Summaries of completed assessments are being placed on the WDNR's source water assessment website at dnr.wi.gov/org/water/dwg/swap/index.htm. All assessments for surface water systems are completed and are available in their entirety at the above website.

If you have questions about source water assessments, contact Jeff Helmuth, WDNR Source Water Assessment Program Coordinator, at (608) 266-5234 or jeffrey.helmuth@dnr.state.wi.us. You can also visit the WDNR source water assessment website at the URL noted above.

NEXT STEPS – ASSESSMENTS TO PROTECTION

As noted in previous newsletters, the focus of the source water program is shifting from assessments to protection. When the assessments were delivered to each municipal system, the WDNR staff person delivering the assessment encouraged the operator to use the assessment to develop a protection plan. Hopefully, each community will take advantage of this opportunity to evaluate its water supply system and what could be done to protect it from contamination. If your community is developing or planning to develop a comprehensive plan, your source water assessment can be used to incorporate wellhead protection into that plan.

Source water assessments include maps of the land areas that contribute water to each well. Potential contaminant sources are identified within these source water areas.

Each assessment also contains a discussion titled "Well Susceptibility to Contamination." This section describes the level of susceptibility (low, moderate or susceptible) of each well to six classes of contaminants and the reason for the susceptibility determination.

By reviewing the susceptibility determination for each well and the reasons for that determination, a

community can identify which well or wells are most susceptible and consider ways that the well susceptibility might be reduced. The first priority would be a well that is "susceptible" to one or more contaminants. Wells "moderately susceptible" to one or more contaminants would be a lower priority.

The last two issues of the Wisconsin Wellhead Protection News

(dnr.wi.gov/org/water/dwg/gw/whp/news.htm)

contained a listing of possible protection actions and protection resources. You can also review the letter I prepared for schools earlier this year

(dnr.wi.gov/water/dwg/gw/whp/whpschools.pdf)

identifying protection and educational options to protect school wells. Feel free to contact me if you have specific questions about protecting your wells.

SOURCE WATER PROTECTION – A NEW PROGRAM AT WRWA

One of the ways in which communities can move toward protection of their water supplies is through the Source Water Protection Program being initiated at the Wisconsin Rural Water Association. This program is funded by the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the National Rural Water Association to promote basinwide protection efforts.

Patrick Harrington was hired in July as the Source Water Specialist for Wisconsin. Patrick's background includes a degree in Watershed Management, working as a county zoning administrator, serving communities as a planning and zoning consultant, as well as working in zoning and land use in the private sector. He will focus on working with local entities in basins or watersheds to promote coordinated efforts to protect groundwater and surface water within basins. He will work to establish partnerships among the various communities, agencies and organizations to work together to protect the basin water resources.

This is a service provided at no cost to local government by WRWA. Hopefully, this program will be a way communities can work together to protect their common water resources for the future. For more information on this new program, you can contact Patrick calling his mobile phone at 715-498-0383, emailing him at sourcewater@sbcglobal.net, faxing him at 920-734-0927 or writing him at Wisconsin Rural Water Association, 350 Water Way, Plover, WI 54467.



GROUNDWATER WORKSHOPS FOR TEACHERS BEING PLANNED

For the fifth year in a row, the WDNR will team up with staff from the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey and the UW Stevens Point Central Wisconsin Groundwater Center to hold three workshops for teachers this winter. At each workshop, teachers learn how to use a groundwater model, receive groundwater-related teaching materials and take the model home to their school at no cost. These workshops have been possible through USEPA wellhead protection "setaside" funds to bring groundwater education to the local level. 96 models have been given away.

In January 2005, teacher workshops will be held the 19th in Madison, 25th in Waukesha and the 28th near Eau Claire. Announcements were sent to schools near the three locations in early September. The announcement and application form are also available online at dnr.wi.gov/org/water/dwg/gw/educate.htm. The deadline for applications is November 1, 2004. Teachers selected to attend will be notified in early December. If you know of teachers who you think might be interested, share this information with them.

Bureau of Drinking Water and Groundwater
Department of Natural Resources
P. O. Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707-7921



The Wisconsin Wellhead Protection Newsletter is a publication of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' Bureau of Drinking Water and Groundwater. Its purpose is to provide current information on wellhead protection topics. It is published in the spring and fall and as needed.

Comments, questions, suggestions and articles are welcome and can be sent to: David Lindorff, Editor, Wisconsin Wellhead Protection Newsletter, Department of Natural Resources, P. O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707-7921
Phone: 608-266-9265. Fax: 608-267-7650
Toll free number: 877-268-9355 (WELL)
Email address: david.lindorff@dnr.state.wi.us

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides equal opportunity in its employment, programs, services and functions under an Affirmative Action Plan. If you have any questions, please write to Equal Opportunity Office, Department of the Interior, Washington, D. C. 20240. This newsletter is available in an alternate format upon request. If interested, please contact David Lindorff, Editor.
PUBL DG-054 (10/2004)